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PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHRB #0531 0840347
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 250347Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 8727
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3191
INFO RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 0345
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 3844
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0377
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 1670
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 0579
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY 0803
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY 1368
RUEHMK/AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY 0979
RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY 0120
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 0611
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA PRIORITY 1170
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA PRIORITY 1456
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 1858

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 000531

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STATE FOR NEA/PI, NEA/MAG, AND NEA/PD FOR FERNANDEZ, SMITH
AND WHITE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/25/2016

TAGS: [OIIP PHUM SCUL KMPI KPAO KIRC MO](#)

SUBJECT: MEPI MEDIA GRANTS PROGRAMS ALARM THE GOM; EMBASSY
SEEKS CONSULTATIONS WITH MEPI AND IREX BEFORE FURTHER ACTION

REF: A. RABAT 507

[1](#)B. RABAT 468

Classified By: DCM WAYNE J. BUSH FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

(C) MEPI's program to support independent media continues to receive negative press coverage in Morocco. It is a violation of Morocco's press code for Moroccan media to accept material assistance from foreign sources. While a wide section of the Moroccan press welcome the MEPI program, per ref A, Minister-Delegate for Foreign Affairs Fassi Fihri and Communication Minister Benabdallah shared their concern with Ambassador Riley that it is against Moroccan law for any owner or employee of a publication in Morocco to accept directly, or indirectly funds or equipment. A grant awarded under any program that provides something beyond training (travel expenses are allowed) may violate Moroccan law and create a difficult situation vis-a-vis the MEPI funded grant program. The Moroccans were pleased by the Ambassador's assurance that the USG would evaluate all proposals and ensure that any proposal funded would not violate Moroccan laws. In addition, the Embassy is concerned that MEPI implementer International Research and Exchange Board's (IREX's) Middle East North Africa Media Development Initiatives Alliance program (MENA MEDIA) offers similar grants to Moroccan media that could violate Moroccan law. Therefore, post requests that MEPI ensure that no grants are made to Moroccan entities under either of these grant programs without post concurrence. Post's review of grants proposed for MEPI funding would be to assure that all grants are consistent with local law. Post asks that MEPI and IREX consult post before they have any further communications with Moroccan applicants for these programs, and that Mission representatives participate in any discussion with potential Moroccan grantees.

Visit Embassy Rabat's Classified Website;
<http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rabat>

Riley